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The Trust Buster.

[Original.]

"How y' goin' to vote this year?"
asked the keeper of a country store of
an old "hayseed," with a wink at the
bystanders.

"Ain't goin' to vote at all," grunted
the old man.

"What, not exercise your duty as a
patriotic citizen?"

"Patriotism be hanged! A man's
patriotism is really what he considers
his interest to be. You fellers know
that for years I've watched the trusts
reachin' out, legally, illegally, bribin',
corruptin', as the case required, to rob
people. You know how when they
want a judge they buy him; when they
want a legislature they buy it. They
was tryin' to buy the gov'ment o' the
United States, but they run up agin
somep'n stronger'n they was their-
selves. They got persecuted under the
law.

"Then my patriotism was bollin'. I
seen a chance for honest men to get
their dues. I seen the time comin'
when all the money a man could earn
needn't go into beef and oil ud be
plenty as bad whisky, and we cud all
live on what we used to live on afore
the trusts sucked the life out of us.

"I thought this was patriotism. It
wasn't. It was nothin' more'n kickin'
agin the other feller gittin' the better
of us. If anybody'd give me money to
pay for things I wanted and have a
good sum left over I wouldn't 'a' kick-
ed. I'd kicked the feller that tried to
interfere with the system. How did I
find that out? I'll tell y'. My brother
Dan went to New York when he was a
boy to go into business. Now he's a
stockbroker.

"Waal, Dan he was allus writin' me
to come down to the city to see him,
an' last summer I went. He's got a
big house 'n' lots o' hired help. I
asked him if there was much preju-
dice agin the trusts in New York. He
didn't say nothin' except, 'Oh, you're a
trust buster, are ye?' I hadn't been
called by that name before, and I
didn't like it nor his way o' sayin' it.
'Well,' he went on, 'if you stay here
long enough we'll take that out o' you.'
'Never,' I said. 'I'll never lose my re-
verence for law, for equity, for justice
and above all the poor, who suffer
from havin' to pay exorbitant prices
for what they need.'

"I used to loaf down in Dan's office
durin' the daytime. There was allus
a lot of fellers there lookin' at a click-
in machine they called a 'ticker.' It
told 'em what their stocks was a sellin'
at. When their stocks went up they
larfed; when they went down they
looked sour as green apples. One day
John told me that a pool-whatever
that was—was a-goin' to put up 'Blood-
sucker Oil' an' if I wanted to make
some money he'd give me a chance.
All he wanted was some margin, as he
called it—that is, a per cent o' the cost
o' the stock—just as a matter o' form.
I wrote a check on my bank for the
amount, and before the ink was dry
on the paper he told me the stock was
boughten.

"Bloodsucker Oil went up and up
and up, and my profits went up with
it. Then news come that the company
had been fined enough money to buy
most o' the farms in this yere state. I
saw my profits wiped out, and then
most o' the money I'd give Dan for
that blamed margin was wiped out
too. All the fellers around the 'ticker'
began to howl that the gov'ment was
ruinin' the business o' the country.
And what d'ye think? When Dan told
me that if my stock went down a few
more per cent he'd have to sell me out
an' I'd lose all I put in I jest riz up
and I cursed and I swore.

"Consarn a gov'ment that'll inter-
fere with what it don't know nothin'
about! These attorney generals and
judges hed better confine 'emselves to
punishin' men for hoss stealin'. The
Bloodsucker Oil company has been
cheapsenin' kerryens for years, an'
now a corrupt set o' men who want to
turn the country into an empire like
Rousia air tryin' to stop 'em. It's a
conspiracy to rob the people and make
'em pay more.'

"The men around the ticker didn't
any o' 'em pay any attention to what
I was sayin'. They was all swearin'
at the administration themselves ex-
cept one man, who says to me, he says:
'But, my friend, don't you want
some power able and ready to see
that the men who manage the compa-
ny whose stock you own don't wreck
it and swindle you?'

"No,' I says; 'I don't. What good's
the stock to me if my margin is all et
up and I git sold out?'

"When I started for home, a ruined
man, gratin' my teeth and cussin' the
gov'ment, Dan he handed me a check,
smilin'. 'I d/ln't buy you any Blood-
sucker Oil,' he says, 'but when I saw

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the decision of the court finin' the
company I sold some shares short for
you. Your profit is \$7,600. Here it is.

"Waal, now I was out of it I could
feel the patriotism oozin' right back
into me, tinglin' in my fingers, my toes
and my ears. 'Y' calls me a trust
buster, Dan,' I says, 'an' I am. I wish
they'd fine Bloodsucker Oil all its cap-
ital, an' you'd sell it all short for me.'

"But when I got home and thort it
all over I made up my mind that I
couldn't conscientiously consider my-
self a patriot any longer. You fellers
kin do the votin'. I'm goin' to stay at
home."

ARNOLD VAN HORN.

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